

A RESEARCH NOTE ON THE MASS SUPPORT FOR "TOUGH" MILITARY INITIATIVES

RICHARD F. HAMILTON
University of Wisconsin

Studies of public reactions in two wartime contexts show that preferences for "tough" policy alternatives are most frequent among the following groups: The highly educated, high status occupations, those with high incomes, younger persons, and those paying much attention to newspapers and magazines.

IN the so-called "limited war," there is a persistent policy question which arises, namely what to do with respect to the formally neutral adjacent country which is in fact aiding a combatant. This question arose in the early 'fifties in Korea (in MacArthur's terms, the problem of the "privileged sanctuary") and has arisen again recently in Vietnam. Broadly speaking, the policy alternatives discussed on these occasions have been either to pull out, to negotiate a settlement, or to pursue the war more aggressively through land attack or by the bombing of supply routes and bases in the neighboring country. Similar choices have been presented in other contexts, e.g., in France during the Algerian war, and are likely to be presented in future conflicts. Given both the obvious importance and recurrent character of these events, it is worthwhile inquiring as to the sources of support for these policy orientations.

Until at least 1914, a general expectation, shared by intellectuals and the population at large, was that aggressive orientations in foreign affairs were characteristic of elites, of upper middle classes (of the staunch Edwardians, the Kipling readers), and also of some elements of the lower middle class who identified with a powerful nation and/or saw some profit to be gained through imperialism. For the most part, the manual workers were seen as pacifist, largely because the socialist parties of Europe were officially committed to this position. In later times, this view still gained support, as, for example, in France during the Algerian War, where the middle and upper classes were more strongly in favor of a hard-headed conduct of the campaign and manual workers less favorable (Sondages, 1956-58).

A diametrically opposed expectation is

widely disseminated in the contemporary United States. Here, largely under the influence of a famous article by Seymour Martin Lipset (1959; also 1960), the expectation is that a preference for a "tough" posture is indicative of "authoritarianism." It is seen as the orientation of an anti-intellectual vigilante mentality, one tired of or suspicious of "talk," an orientation which prefers direct action against the enemy. Following these assumptions, a choice of the "aggression" option would be expected more frequently among manual workers, among low status persons, among those with little education, and among the dispossessed and the alienated. Correspondingly, we have an alternative picture of the "upper middle classes" as "liberal" (at least in matters of civil liberties), as favorably disposed toward due process, as "flexible" in their outlooks, and as compromise-oriented. Given these traits, it would seem unlikely that they would be the supporters of a "tough" line.

The evidence which follows comes from the 1952 and 1964 election studies of the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan.¹ The 1952 study contained the following questions:

"Do you think we did the right thing in getting into the fighting in Korea two years ago or should we have stayed out?"

¹ The basic presentation of findings from the first study is to be found in Angus Campbell, *et al.* (1954). Access to the original materials was made possible through the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research. I wish to thank both Professor Campbell and his associates and the Consortium for the use of these materials. I also wish to thank the Center of International Studies, Princeton, New Jersey, for their generous support of the larger study from which this note is taken. A more extensive analysis of the 1952 study appears elsewhere (Hamilton, 1967).

*upper
middle class
(American
sociologists' bias?)*

This question was followed by one on preferred current policy:

"Which of the following things do you think it would be best for us to do *now* in Korea?"

Pull out of Korea entirely?

Keep on trying to get a peaceful settlement?

Take a stronger stand and bomb Manchuria and China?

Extab. The responses to the first question showed a very clear relationship with socioeconomic status variables. The higher the occupational level, the income level, or the educational level, the stronger was the support for the original commitment. Only 29 percent of grade-school-educated persons, for example, supported the Korean commitment as compared to 59 percent among those who had completed college.

In response to the second question, 9 per-

cent of the sample favored a withdrawal, 45 percent favored negotiation, 38 percent favored taking a "stronger stand," and the remainder were DKs, NAs, and so forth. If there were a bellicose tendency on the part of low-educated, low-status populations, it should be indicated in their preference for this "tough" alternative.

A summary examination of the basic cross-tabulations shows the exact opposite to be the case. The bombing orientation is present to a greater than average degree among the following groups: males, whites, high status occupations, high education groups, high income groups, Protestants, those outside the South, younger people, Republicans, the politically concerned, and those with high media attention, in particular those who followed the election in magazines and newspapers. (Table 1) The only

TABLE 1. ATTITUDE TOWARD KOREAN WAR POLICY BY BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS *

Background Characteristics:	Percent Preferring				N
	Pull Out	Negotiation	Bombing China	Other, Don't Know No Answer	
Total	9	45	38	7	1613
Race					
White	9	44	40	7	1452
Negro	15	55	20	11	157
Sex					
Male	7	43	44	6	737
Female	11	47	33	9	876
Occupation of Head					
Professional	9	47	37	7	107
Self-employed; Managers	3	40	50	7	224
Clerical, Sales	8	45	39	7	154
Skilled, Semi-Skilled	6	46	40	6	459
Unskilled, Service	11	50	29	9	174
Protective Service	4	27	65	4	26
Unemployed	4	56	16	24	25
Farmers	13	46	33	8	178
Education					
None	0	60	28	12	25
Some Grade School	11	48	28	13	335
Completed Grade School	13	51	29	7	300
Some High School	7	46	40	6	248
Completed High School	8	41	45	6	245
Other High School, Non-College	6	47	43	4	219
Some College	7	32	57	4	133
Completed College	12	40	39	9	105
Income					
Under \$1,000	10	53	22	15	135
\$1,000-1,999	12	48	26	14	177

* Source: 1952 Election Study, Survey Research Center, University of Michigan.

Background Ch

Income—Cont

\$2,000-2,999

\$3,000-3,999

\$4,000-4,999

\$5,000-7,499

\$7,500-9,999

\$10,000 and

Religion

Protestants-

Protestants-

Catholics

Jews

Other

None

Region

Northeast

Midwest

South

Far West

Age

18-24

25-29

30-34

35-39

40-44

45-49

50-54

55-59

60-64

65 and Over

Political Conce

Care Very M

Care Pretty

Don't Care V

Don't Care a

Party Identific

Democrat

Independent

Republican

Media Attention

Read about

Quite a Lot

Not Very

No

Read about

Quite a Lot

Not Very

No

Most Import

Magazines

Newspapers

Television

Radio

None

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TABLE 5—Continued

Background Characteristics:	Percent Preferring				N
	Pull Out	Negotiation	Bombing China	Other, Don't Know No Answer	
Income—Continued					
\$2,000–2,999	11	49	30	9	255
\$3,000–3,999	10	45	40	5	364
\$4,000–4,999	6	49	42	3	233
\$5,000–7,499	6	40	47	6	273
\$7,500–9,999	9	42	46	4	81
\$10,000 and Over	11	26	52	10	61
Religion					
Protestants-White	9	41	42	8	1013
Protestants-Negro	15	54	19	12	142
Catholics	8	50	38	4	335
Jews	2	64	28	6	50
Other	7	50	21	21	14
None	18	61	15	6	34
Region					
Northeast	8	49	36	7	389
Midwest	9	45	41	5	580
South	8	48	32	11	440
Far West	14	35	43	8	204
Age					
18–24	8	47	41	4	101
25–29	9	45	41	4	182
30–34	5	50	38	6	202
35–39	5	44	43	8	189
40–44	9	48	36	6	191
45–49	11	44	36	8	148
50–54	12	43	36	9	136
55–59	9	44	36	10	128
60–64	12	39	41	8	105
65 and Over	11	47	31	11	209
Political Concern					
Care Very Much	8	44	43	5	451
Care Pretty Much	7	46	40	6	616
Don't Care Very Much	13	47	32	8	333
Don't Care at All	13	47	27	13	159
Party Identification					
Democrat	7	52	36	6	751
Independent	10	41	41	8	356
Republican	12	38	42	7	439
Media Attention					
Read about Campaign in Magazines					
Quite a Lot	8	34	52	6	227
Not Very Much	8	45	39	8	421
No	10	48	34	8	954
Read about Campaign in Newspapers					
Quite a Lot	7	39	47	6	630
Not Very Much	9	49	36	6	644
No	13	52	23	11	332
Most Important Source					
Magazines	5	35	56	4	80
Newspapers	10	42	41	7	353
Television	7	49	38	6	504
Radio	12	44	36	8	445
None	13	54	15	18	101

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high education
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younger people,
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ERISTICS *

Other, Don't Know Answer	N
7	1613
7	1452
11	157
6	737
9	876
7	107
7	224
7	154
6	459
9	174
4	26
24	25
8	178
12	25
13	335
7	300
6	248
6	245
4	219
4	133
9	105
15	135
14	177

instance of what might be an authoritarian-vigilante mentality in lower status ranks appears in the case of the small number of "protective service" workers (police) among whom the pro-bombing percentage was well above that of all other occupations.

Questions on Vietnam policy were contained in the Survey Research Center's 1964 election study (post election) which closely parallels the 1952 question.²

The questions read:

"Have you been paying any attention to what is going on in Vietnam?"

Those who answered yes were then asked: "Which of the following do you think we should do now in Vietnam?"

Pull out of Vietnam entirely?

Keep our soldiers in Vietnam but try to end the fighting?

Take a stronger stand even if it means invading North Vietnam?

Don't know.

No interest (indicated in response to first question).

The results shown in Table 2 bear a striking similarity to those found in the 1952 study even though the events are separated by 12 years and though the country and circumstances are different. Again the "tough" preference is found among the males, the whites, the high-status occupations, highly educated groups, groups with high incomes, younger persons, Republicans, the politically concerned and media attenders, again especially those following the newspapers and magazines. The only difference from 1952 is that the special distinctiveness of white Protestant vis-à-vis Catholics has disappeared.

The "don't know" and "no interest" response increases among low education groups. If, however, we take those who "do know" and repercentage, the result is even more closely parallel to the 1952 findings. For example, 26 percent of the most poorly educated favored either a pullout or an end to the fighting as compared to 12 percent who were for taking a stronger stand. The relationship is reversed among the college educated with 35 and 48 percent re-

spectively taking the same positions. Just under a third, therefore, of the low education group with opinions took the "tough" line as opposed to 58 percent of the equivalent college educated.³

In summary, these two studies attest to the presence of something which, at least with respect to this kind of foreign affairs concern, we might label as "upper middle class authoritarianism."⁴

While the relationship between the tough attitude and media attention can be no more than suggestive, if this proves to be a case of media influence, then it is of some relevance to the so-called "mass society" theories. In this case, however, it would be necessary to respecify somewhat and make the point applicable to the "upper middle

³ It is obviously impossible to consider all of the more important alternative explanations in this brief note. It might be argued that the results shown here reflect a special "organizational" contribution. In both 1952 and 1964, some leading Republicans advocated the tougher line; conceivably they brought their upper middle class followers around to acceptance of that position. It is possible that Democrats (who quite incidentally happen to be disproportionately manual and lower middle class) adopted the moderate position either as a defensive reaction or, especially in 1964, they were led to the position by their presidential candidate's arguments. An examination of the pattern with party identification controlled (based on the 1952 study) showed clearly that the policy preferences were status-linked rather than party-linked. In both camps, for example, it was the low-educated who favored negotiation and the highly educated who favored the attack on China. The 1964 results showed this same pattern. There was a stronger party linkage in 1964, this occurring very largely among the college-educated. In both party camps, however, it was the college educated who were most prone to take the "tough" line. The differences among those with grammar school and high school education, as in 1952, were very small.

⁴ A similar result appeared in the recent San Francisco referendum on the Vietnam war. There too it was "voters in exclusive residential districts . . . along with members of the economic middle class . . ." who said "No" to the proposal to pull out American troops. The "Yes" vote came from districts in which the Negro population was heavy and in areas "to which poverty and redevelopment programs have been aimed." See Lawrence E. Davies' report in *The New York Times*, November 9, 1967. A study of the adult population in the state of Wisconsin undertaken in 1965 also came up with findings which closely parallel the results presented here (Dolbeare, 1968). A more extended criticism of the working-class authoritarianism thesis may be found in my 1966 article.

² The questions are taken directly from the 1964 Codebook; the original materials were made available through the Inter-University Consortium.

TABLE 2

Background Characteristics

Total

Race

White

Negro

Sex

Male

Female

Occupation of Head

Professional

Managers

Clerical, Sales

Skilled Workers

Semi-Skilled Workers

Service Workers

Unskilled Workers

Farmers

Unemployed

Education

Less than 8 Grades

8 Grades

9-11 Grades

9-11 and Non-

College Training

12 Grades

12 Grades and Non-

College Training

Some College

College Ed., B.A.

M.A., Ph.D., etc.

Income

Under \$1,000

1,000-1,999

2,000-2,999

3,000-3,999

4,000-4,999

5,000-5,999

6,000-7,499

7,500-9,999

10,000-14,999

15,000 or Over

Religion

Catholic

Jewish

Protestant

White

Negro

No Preference

No Answer

Region

New England

Middle Atlantic

East N. Central

* Source: 1964

So - status does count - but opposite to hypothesis
(or Agents?!) (or KAHN!)

Marx hyp: Imperialism / Estate

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TABLE 2. ATTITUDE TOWARD VIETNAM WAR POLICY BY BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS *

Background Characteristics	Percent Preferring					N
	Pull Out	End Fighting	Strong Stand	Don't Know	No Interest	
Total	8	22	29	15	18	1571
Race						
White	8	25	34	17	17	1291
Negro	11	22	11	11	44	148
Sex						
Male	8	22	41	13	16	642
Female	9	26	23	19	23	808
Occupation of Head						
Professional	6	33	37	15	9	144
Managers	7	21	43	15	15	209
Clerical, Sales	7	28	36	17	12	149
Skilled Workers	9	23	36	16	17	219
Semi-Skilled Workers	7	29	25	13	26	204
Service Workers	11	25	23	19	22	85
Unskilled Workers	7	22	22	17	33	60
Farmers	5	20	34	16	24	74
Unemployed	13	28	16	13	31	32
Education						
Less than 8 Grades	8	18	12	10	51	177
8 Grades	10	23	16	23	29	177
9-11 Grades	10	24	25	22	20	244
9-11 and Non-College Training	8	29	29	24	10	49
12 Grades	7	26	35	15	18	310
12 Grades and Non-College Training	10	26	41	11	11	148
Some College	7	25	47	11	9	175
College Ed., B.A., M.A., Ph.D., etc.	8	27	48	17	4	163
Income						
Under \$1,000	10	12	5	19	53	58
1,000-1,999	13	17	14	17	40	101
2,000-2,999	9	25	23	14	29	112
3,000-3,999	13	24	27	17	19	129
4,000-4,999	10	29	22	17	22	126
5,000-5,999	9	25	32	15	19	161
6,000-7,499	4	26	35	17	18	201
7,500-9,999	6	28	37	16	12	220
10,000-14,999	10	21	44	13	12	194
15,000 or Over	8	33	42	18	8	91
Religion						
Catholic	8	26	34	14	18	326
Jewish	16	34	18	21	11	38
Protestant						
White	8	24	34	17	18	883
Negro	12	22	11	12	44	139
No Preference						
No Answer	15	21	21	21	21	52
Region						
New England	10	34	32	11	14	73
Middle Atlantic	10	20	29	19	23	251
East N. Central	9	26	31	18	17	287

* Source: 1964 Election Study, Survey Research Center, University of Michigan.

TABLE 2.—Continued

Background Characteristics	Percent Preferring					N
	Pull Out	End Fighting	Strong Stand	Don't Know	No Interest	
Region— <i>Continued</i>						
West N. Central	6	26	31	16	21	162
Solid South	10	21	31	16	23	321
Border States	7	32	25	10	26	126
Mountain States	7	24	31	21	17	42
Pacific States	6	24	40	15	14	188
Age						
18-24	4	29	37	9	22	105
25-29	7	22	41	8	22	159
30-34	8	33	37	7	15	148
35-39	8	20	37	15	21	148
40-44	8	27	36	16	14	172
45-49	7	27	26	19	21	136
50-54	10	28	24	16	22	156
55-59	9	15	30	27	19	114
60-64	11	23	26	23	16	99
65 Plus	13	20	20	21	26	210
Interest in Politics						
Very Much Interest	11	23	42	16	9	558
Somewhat Interested	8	28	30	16	19	533
Not Much Interest	6	21	17	18	40	353
Party Identification						
Strong Democrat	8	25	27	16	24	394
Not Very Strong Democrat	9	25	29	17	21	364
Independent, Close to Democrat	9	30	29	17	14	128
Independent	8	29	21	16	27	105
Independent, Close to Republican	9	19	47	16	10	81
Not Very Strong Republican	8	27	32	15	18	195
Strong Republican	11	16	49	17	7	157
Do You Read Newspapers?						
Yes, Regularly	9	28	40	17	7	575
Yes, Often	9	25	38	12	15	204
Yes, Time to Time	9	24	27	19	22	263
Yes, Once in Awhile	7	21	20	20	32	85
No	7	20	17	14	43	310
Do You Read Magazines?						
Yes, a Good Many	11	28	42	15	3	142
Yes, Several	9	27	41	19	4	234
Yes, One or Two	11	26	37	16	10	185
No	8	22	26	16	29	877
Most Important Medium						
Newspapers	10	26	37	16	12	349
Radio	2	25	29	13	31	55
TV	9	24	28	17	23	836
Magazines	11	25	47	14	4	101
Newspaper and Radio	..	..	50	25	25	4
Newspaper and TV	8	36	20	20	16	25
Radio and TV	..	20	60	..	20	5
Magazine and Newspaper or Radio or TV	6	18	50	25	..	16
None	4	10	12	10	63	49

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Campbell, Angus. Miller. 1954 The Voter son.

Dolbeare, Patricia. 1968 "The soc the Vietn versity or ology.

Hamilton, Richard. 1966 "Working

class masses." The other point to be made is that low status groups prove to be strongly favorable to negotiation. It is they who prove to be "moderate" and conciliatory.

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No Interest	N
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21	162
23	321
26	126
17	42
14	188

22	105
22	159
15	148
21	148
14	172
21	136
22	156
19	114
16	99
26	210

9	558
19	533
40	353

24	394
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21	364
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14	128
27	105

10	81
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18	195
7	157

7	575
15	204
22	263
32	85
43	310

3	142
4	234
10	185
29	877

12	349
31	55
23	836
4	101
25	4
16	25
20	5

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63	49